

LEAGUE 'NO' TO PREMIER DIVISION

AN attempt by 10 member clubs of the Wycombe Cricket League to form a Premier Division, based largely on a club's facilities, was defeated at an extraordinary general meeting of the league at the Guildhall, High Wycombe, on Friday.

Their proposal was beaten by 17 votes to 13. But there could be trouble ahead for the league, because there is a growing feeling that the 10 clubs concerned might break away and form a league of their own.

This view was expressed by Mr. Frank Pearce, secretary of Booker one of the clubs concerned. He said he was most disappointed by the decision of the league. "Speaking personally, I feel that the clubs will go it alone next season."

This issue will no doubt be discussed at a special meeting at Holmer Green on Wednesday,

November 20, at which the 10 clubs are expected to attend. In addition to Booker and Holmer Green, the clubs concerned are Coleshill, Great Kingshill, Hampden, Hazlemere, Lacey Green, Prestwood, Tylers Green and Winchmore Hill.

The proposal at Friday's meeting was put by Mr. Peter Crosby of Hazlemere, who stressed that the object of forming the Premier Division was to raise the standard of the league.

INCENTIVE

He explained "One of the by-products of a Premier Division would be an incentive for those clubs not qualifying, to improve their facilities so that they might qualify in the future."

Mr. Crosby set out the conditions for entry into the Premier Division, which would be under the management of the League Council. It would elect the 10 original members.

Entry, said Mr. Crosby, would be judged on playing ability, playing conditions and the ability to run a reserve side. He stressed that it was not a closed shop and that promotion and relegation would be part of the process.

He said that relegation would be automatic to any club whose facilities or playing standard fell below the required level. In this case another club with the qualifications would be elected, although he stressed that 10 was neither a maximum nor minimum figure.

The league secretary Mr. Stanley Williams then reported on a recent meeting between some members of the league committee and officials of Wycombe District Council, whose pitches came in for criticism at the meeting. Mr. Williams said there would be closer collaboration between the bodies in future.

The proposal for a Premier

Division came in for strong criticism from Mr. John Evans of Naphill, who called it "sheer platitudinous rubbish. The selfishness of this proposal takes the biscuit."

He was particularly upset that champions Caribbean Club would be ineligible because they played on a council pitch. Mr. Lemuel Young of Carribbeans said that not all clubs were lucky enough to have their own grounds and that pressure should be put on the authorities for better facilities.

A member from Coleshill said that cricket was a game of skill between bat and ball and that on some pitches the batsman was at an unfair disadvantage. The ball sometimes flies around the head, he added.

A league umpire felt that the formation of a Premier Division with a Reserve Section would raise the standard in the long term, because youngsters coming into reserve sides would be able to start on good pitches.

Mr. Brian Woodbridge of Westbourne said that it was cricket ability that mattered most of all. He also felt that all the good players in the league would move to clubs in the Premier Division, and that the rest of the league would deteriorate as a result.

After the 90 minute discussion a secret vote was taken, and this resulted in 13 clubs supporting the proposal with 17 against. Seven clubs did not attend the meeting, while one abstained.